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The Non-Subscribing Presbyterian

No. 277. AUGUST, 1930.

TRUTH — LIBERTY — RELIGION.

"If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men."
—Romans xii. : 18.

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Editorial.

The Sustentation Fund.

The request of the Moderator for "a little space" to urge the claims of the Sustentation Fund is readily granted. Indeed we gladly devote editorial space for this important matter in order to emphasise the points raised in the Moderator's letter which appears on another page. The need for a much larger fund may not appear very urgent at the moment, at least to many of our readers though the majority of our ministers are forced to accept another point of view—but the need will probably become more urgent in the future. Finance as such may not mix well with religion as such, but the cold hard fact remains that finance often has the last word to say in practically all our talks on Church matters. In the "call" to a minister, the voice of finance is heard among other voices and, other things being equal, this voice must be heeded by a minister with heavy family responsibilities. The Moderator's appeal for a larger Sustentation Fund, including as it does a request for "pence as well as pounds," should not fall on deaf ears.

* *

Synod Lecture.

At the conclusion of this year's Synod Lecture the hope was expressed that the lecture would be published. Thanks to Mr. Cross, we have been able to do this in the present issue. Unfortunately, owing to pressure of space, part of the lecture must be held over for the September number. It is with confidence that we commend "A Hundred Years of Subscription" to the attention of our readers. The article will repay careful reading and still more careful re-reading. It will enable us to give convincing reasons for the faith that is in us, something we should always be ready to do in order to justify our existence as a separate denomination. Granted that we should always be prepared to stress the things that unite us to other denominations, we must of necessity, occasionally emphasise our own point of view and our reasons for holding it. This article will help us to do both.

* *

M.C.O.S.A.

The ties between Irish Non-Subscribers and Manchester College, Oxford, are becoming stronger and more numerous. This year seven ministers of our Church attended the annual meetings of the Old Students' Association, and derived much benefit from the lectures and discussions, not to mention the benefit derived from meeting old friends engaged in the same great work. The President this year was Mr. Cross, who earned high praise for his wisdom and tact in the chair. When over forty speakers are trying to present over forty different points of view at the same time, the President's job is not to be envied. Seeing that the Irish contingent included Mr. Agnew, it is unnecessary to add that the discussion of weighty and fundamental problems, was interspersed with inimitable Irish wit and humour.

* *

Spiritualism.

As was inevitable after the death of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle there is a revival of interest in Spiritualism. The subject is a delicate one and while we hesitate to follow Bishop Barnes in pronouncing Spiritualism

"a fantastic type of belief" (is it not too strong to say this of a belief held by the great scientist Sir Oliver Lodge?) yet we must doubt the authenticity of some of the alleged messages from 'the other side.' Credulity is strained to breaking point when the Rev. C. L. Tweedale, a Yorkshire Vicar, reports having received a 'direct message' from Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, commencing as follows: "Well, Tweedale, I have arrived here in Paradise. That is not heaven—Oh no! It is what we should call a dumping place." Knowing nothing of the circumstances in which this "message" was delivered we can offer little in the way of definite criticism. We can however express the opinion, born of deep conviction, that what lies behind the veil is a mystery and was intended to be so by the Creator. This is not to rule out psychic phenomena. It is just to question the wisdom of seeking the living among the dead, with the same senses that serve for our earthly existence.

* *

Political Power of "The Trade."

Giving evidence before the Licensing Commission on July 8th, Lord Astor made some startling and disquieting statements which deserved more prominence than the press gave them. To find such fundamentally important matters relegated to the corners and column-ends of newspapers is a matter of grave concern. The fact that the Drink Trade has tried "continuously to get Lady Astor out of public life" for no other reason than the one that she is an ardent temperance advocate, is concerned with public morality as well as with the drink trade. The same applies to the fact that "two parliamentary candidates were approached with offers of money from 'the trade.'" In connection with any vested interest such a precedure would be deplorable, in connection with the drink trade it is doubly so. Fortunately this method of bribery and corruption is not often used—Lord Astor admits this—but the method is still used too often for temperance workers and indeed for all who are interested in public morality.

* *

Modern Youth and War.

Says the Rev. A. E. J. Cosson, the President of the United Methodist Conference, "Unless I entirely mistake the resolves of the young Christian men and women of to-day, they mean to follow up their repudiation of war by non-compliance in any war of the future." Such a statement is certainly optimistic but we very much doubt whether it is in accordance with fact. There is little evidence to suggest that in the event of war, the young men will not flock to the colours with much of the patriotism and enthusiasm shown in the last war. The "My country right or wrong" attitude is still dominant in the British Isles. Recent visitors to Germany and France are ready to testify that in these great countries the love of the homeland comes before the love of right over wrong, so far as international problems are concerned. This being so it is difficult to find evidence to support the belief that the young men and women of to-day "mean to follow up their repudiation of war by non-compliance in any war of the future." Such statements should not make us relax our efforts for world peace. Let us beware of false hopes. While we read of the successful termination of various peace conferences we might at the same time remember that at present there are more men under arms in Europe than ever before in a time of peace.

For Courage of Soul.

Lord,
We pray thee for courage of soul
To take from life all the unguessed good things,
Which thou hast hidden therein for us.

We pray thee for courage of soul,
That, even when grief and agony
Have robbed us, and left us wounded by the wayside,
To die lonely and destitute,
We may rejoice and be glad,
Because these grim foes but drive us closer to thee
To shelter trustfully beneath thy love.

We pray thee for courage of soul
That we may trust implicitly that love of thine,
Which gives us back generously, a thousand times over
All that we have lost.

AMEN.

An Indian College Prayer.

A Hundred Years of Subscription.

By The Rev. R. Nicol Cross, M.A.

THE ANNUAL SYNOD LECTURE 1930.

I.—Non-Subscription in Ireland.

Let me remind you that Non-Subscribing Presbyterianism constitutes the original form of Presbyterianism in this land. At the risk of suggesting to some the well-known picture called "Dignity and Impudence," let me say it is not we Non-Subscribers who are the innovators and upstarts in religion, but the larger body which shares our Presbyterian name, but, which sold its birthright of freedom for that mess of human pottage, known as the "Westminster Confession of Faith."

"For over 60 years" the Rev. Alexander Gordon an adequate authority, tells us, "No other subscription was known in Ulster" except that which committed its adherents to the Solemn League and Covenant of 1643, embodying a pledge for the reformation of religion "in doctrine, worship, discipline and government, according to the Word of God and the example of the best reformed Churches." For the first eight years of its life, says Mr. Gordon, the General Synod of Ulster, founded in 1690, was free from subscription, and when in 1698 the latter was introduced it was only applicable to licentiates. In 1705 this was extended to ordinands.

Indeed as far down as 1720 the Synod passed a "Pacific Act," confirming the Act of 1705, but adding that, should any phrase in the Westminster Confession be unacceptable to a candidate for the ministry of a church, he was at liberty to substitute "his own expressions," provided these were compatible "with soundness in the Faith."

It is not my business here to pursue the Subscription controversy in the North of Ireland, further, nor to deal with the Remonstrance of 1829, drawn up by Dr. Henry Montgomery and his supporters, against the appointment by the Synod of a Committee for the theological examination of all candidates for the ministry of the Church, a Remonstrance which brought our Remonstrant Synod of Ulster into being a hundred years ago. My argument is confined to the proposition that the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church, by its insistence in a Protestant sense on the Bible and the Bible only, and excluding the Westminster Confession, as the Rule of Christian faith and conduct, is, to that extent at least, the true representative and heir of the original Presbyterian Church in Ireland. It is also in that respect the most loyal to the First Principles of Protestantism as a religious movement in European history generally.

I will go further and say that in explicitly subordinating the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to "the teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Code, I.) it is only unfolding an absolutely necessary implication of essential Protestantism, for the Scriptures embody and set forth many varying and conflicting rules of faith and conduct. While, first, by claiming "the right, of every Christian to form his own opinions" about Scriptural teaching, and to "worship God agreeably to the dictates of his own conscience" (Code, II.), and secondly, by repudiating Tests and Confessions, as contrary to the "right of private judgment," and restrictive of "that free enquiry and discusssion, which are essential to the extension of religious knowledge" (Code, III.) our Church again shows its unreduced loyalty to the very soul of Protestantism and its insight into the only really possible principle and rational or ethical method for a Church living under a Dispensation where God's revelation is progressive and man's thought and conscience both undergo development.

I regret to say that candid observation will not permit me to claim that judged by pragmatic tests the Churches which have pursued the method of Non-Subscription have been more successful, or more vigorous than those which have organised themselves round creeds. But that is no valid measure of their inherent truth and rightness. Churches, like other organisms, survive by adaptation to their environment, and we all know that Christianity itself has only secured its place in the European system by submitting to such transformations and degradations of the original teaching of the Master as assimilated it to Paganism and Imperialism, and so rendered it fittest to survive in that environment. It was not "the pale Galilean" but the Pope who conquered.

The era in which a free religion can and will come into its own, and show that it alone is fittest to survive, will be the era

when through inner development and education mankind has achieved a free mind and soul, and we have a race or community in which genuine spirituality and morality have displaced superstition and all its works and consolations. That type of humanity has yet to be evolved. So long as the race is mainly composed of sheep we shall have herd-ideas and herd-religion flourishing. If we are to judge a religion on grounds of popular success, Roman Catholicism is a far truer and higher faith than Quakerism. So we might say the civilisation of Denmark or Holland is much lower than that of China.

When I say however, that a Non-Subscribing Church may fade and fail because it may be too high and exacting for the intelligence and character of the population as a whole, I must not be understood to imply that Non-Subscribers are necessarily better and more spiritual than their neighbours. The fading and the failure may come from causes within rather than without. The collapse of a structure may be due to the slow action of dry rot inside it, and the inheritance of our spiritual forefathers may be let slip, because it has fallen into the too feeble hands of unworthy successors. The fold may also be diminished by the well-known attraction of larger herds for frail sheep.

Those who have no root in themselves will have little use for a free faith. But taking a general view I feel bound to confess that the stronger position of the creedal churches is partly due to the more faithful loyalty and greater vigour which they are able to inspire in their supporters. They have displayed far more of that evangelical zeal and missionary spirit on which Protestant forms of religion and Churches, at any rate, flourish best, than the more liberal of the free churches have created in their adherents. I leave it to you to judge how far this is the natural result of tolerance or the incidental effect of indifference and whether it is to be accepted with resignation or removed as being a reproach.

In any case it would appear that creeds are favourable to institutional religion and helpful to churches whatever their effect upon mind and character, which are the chief consideration in spiritual religion. And to this aspect of the subject we now turn.

II.

I presume it will be admitted that the primary aim of Subscription is to secure uniformity of belief in the religious community, in other words to prevent heresy, and that the assumption underlying its enforcement is that finality of religious faith and of its interpretation in doctrine has been reached.

A study of the history of the principle and policy of Subscription in the last 100 years or so will perhaps help us to form a judgment on these two points. You will not expect the treatment in this lecture to be exhaustive or to go into too many details. It is a large undertaking and reminds one of those immense canvasses painted by Canaletto which one sees on the walls of the Louvre Gallery in Paris. My task will be to give a reproduction of the subject in miniature.

A.—Has Subscription to Articles and Creeds, as a matter of historical fact, succeeded in securing uniformity?

I answer, it has not, unless there has been behind it a force strong and penetrating enough to repress thought and paralyse the mind.

(1) The **Roman Catholic Church** will serve as an illustration of this. That Church has achieved uniformity, not entirely, but to a very considerable extent, but only by repudiating the right of private judgment, by the severe repression of inner doubt in the individual mind, and by the ex-communication of those who according to its own verdict have transgressed the limits of orthodoxy. In other words Roman Catholic uniformity is the result of coercive discipline and violence and even so it is only approximate and means less conformity of inward thought than conventionality of outward expression. As long as you keep your tongue within your teeth even Roman Catholicism will be little concerned about the heresy within your heart. Silence can cover a multitude of sins. If the Church turned out Abbé Loisy and turned down Father Tyrrell, it retained in its bosom Lord Acton and Baron von Hügel, who lived in a very different intellectual world from that of the average Irish or Italian priest.

(2) The **Church of England.**—In Protestantism the uniformity has remained much further from realisation. As regards the Church of England:—

Dr. Martineau wrote in 1850, "It is notorious that if to-morrow all the sects of the nation were thrust into the Church of England, its disunion and diversities of

creed would be no greater than at present." (Essays, Vol 2, p. 113).

"We are persuaded that both laity and clergy are ashamed of the ridiculous affectation of a dogmatic unity to which every Sunday publishes a thousand contradictions. They will know that in spite of this pretence the English Church harbours every great heresy that ever provoked the peremptoriness of Rome, and among her writers of renown can produce the modern counterparts of Arius and Eutyches, of Pelagius and Sabellius" (Ibid. p. 187).

Nay, that church even glories in this situation as a proof of its comprehensiveness and liberality. But, continues Martineau, the praise for liberality must wait till she has relaxed something of the official formulae by which she seeks, though in vain, to secure orthodoxy. Till then her admission of heretics is at the cost of "a shameful unveracity."

In his "Sincerity and Subscription" (1903) Canon Hensley Henson, now the distinguished Bishop of Durham, wrote of "the solemn fiction of identity" which reigned from Nicaea to the Vatican, and of "the futility of Ecclesiastical decisions as means of securing identity of creed" (p. 22). "The permanance of formulae is seen to be no secure indication of the permanance of the beliefs they are designed to express."

He quotes Jeremy Taylor who, recognising the diversities and disunions of the Church, proposed only the "Apostles' Creed," as a sufficient basis of union, combined with an "honest endeavour to find out what truths we can, and a charitable and mutual permission to others that disagree from us and our opinions." On which Dr. Henson's comment is that "even in that age before the birth of modern science and criticism, the futility of enforcing even so brief a creed had become manifest" (p. 25).

In the 19th century the pressure of change and diversity of belief in Anglicanism had become so insistent that the Formula of Assent or Subscription had to be officially modified in 1865, to these words:—

"I assent to the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion and to the Book of Common Prayer. I believe the doctrine of the Church of England as therein set forth to be agreeable to the Word of God." While there is still demanded of the clergy at ordination the declaration "I unfeignedly believe the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testament."

The fact remains however, that the modification of 1865 has failed to solve the problem inherent in the very principle of Subscription.

Dr. Henson in the book from which I have already quoted wrote: "It is now admitted by all fair-minded persons that the language of the Anglican formularies cannot in all cases be pressed in an exact or literal sense. The "general assent" to the Thirty-nine Articles is admittedly compatible with a particular repudiation of a good many of them, and the Deacon's Declaration of unfeigned belief of "all the Canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testament" cannot reasonably be supposed to commit him to the absurdities which would be implied in a rigid understanding of the words" (Ibid p. 29).

"Even the most abject Bibilolater could hardly believe unfeignedly," he says, "contradictory accounts of the same event often to be found in the historical books of the Bible."

Permit me also to quote one of the greatest scholars and philosophers Anglicanism produced in the last generation, Dr. Hastings Rashdall, who was Dean of Carlisle. "The requirement of literal belief in every word contained in the Bible, Prayer Book and Articles is admitted in the present day (i.e., in 1905) to be an excessive and impossible requirement. It is abandoned by tacit and universal consent." "The great majority of instructed churchmen will admit without a moment's hesitation that there are some things in Scripture which they do not believe and do not expect others to believe; as to the Articles they are seldom mentioned without derision and contempt by every party in the Church of England which professes the fiercest zeal for dogmatic orthodoxy" (Anglican Liberalism, p. 95). "Denials of facts or doctrines contained in the Old and New Testament have been made by Archbishops, Bishops, Divinity Professors, and Scholars without number, who have risen to high positions in the Church with general approval."

It is quite evident then that in Anglicanism the only thing the formulæ of Subscription have secured is neither uniformity nor orthodoxy, but what Dr. Martineau described 50 years earlier even, as a state of affairs in which you could not reasonably infer a clergyman's real and private beliefs from his official and public declarations.

A study of the writings of the leaders of the modernist school of Anglicanism today, like Dean Inge or Professor Bethune-Baker, or of the "Liberal Evangelical" school like Bishop Barnes, or of the latest nondescript popular school, like the Rev. Dick Shepherd, Canon of Canterbury, and the Rev. Harold Anson, will only serve to screw down the lid on the coffin of the dear departed theory that by the method of doctrinal subscription you can preserve orthodoxy and uniformity. All you can do that way is to embalm and mummify their dead body so as periodically to perform ritual dances round it in the form of heresy-hunts, like howling dervishes,—ceremonies which have now lost all their attraction except in Tennessee, the South African Veldt, and Ulster.

(3) Presbyterianism.

This argument is only strengthened by a glance at the history of Presbyterianism in its native home, God's own country, Scotland. If you ask the important question "Stands Scotland where she did"? the only answer is, No. There was a time when in that land every man and every other woman was a theologian, and an infallible theologian at that.

Its divines were inspired to clear up and improve on the Bible itself, in that complete and final revelation of the mind of God to man,—the Westminster Confession. But alas, the natural depravity of human nature has infected even this Confession with the curse of mortality and it has not escaped the Fall of Adam. The Serpent has got into the garden and even Westminster could not be kept intact from the new knowledge and the discrimination of good and evil.

The Established Kirk nursed in her bosom John and Edward Caird, preeminently, who corrupted the youth in the classrooms of Glasgow University and beyond, by churning up their philosophy, made in Germany, with the sincere milk of the Word, and in place of the fountain of living water gave the lambs of the Kirk a Hegelianised mixture of Christianity to quench their theological thirst. Some of the ablest and most intelligent ministers drank deep of this emulsion and found it much more palatable and nourishing to their religious faith than the crude cod liver oil dished up in the old bottles of Calvin and Knox.

It may be said that this mixture got well into the system of the theology which the leaders of the Kirk and its scholarly ministers kept bottled on the shelves of their colleges and studies, for private and privileged consumption, and no emetic administered in the form of heresy-hunts with all their distressing spasms, was able to dislodge it. It still floats in solution and partial dissolution in the living constitution of present-day Scottish theology, which up to the War at any rate received fresh infusions of the German element from continual sojourns of many of its theological students at the universities of that country. The interpretation of the old standard of doctrine thence derived can only be called rather liberal. And you could be pretty sure that a scholarly minister, with true Scottish canniness did not carry all his theological eggs in one basket, but with his native shrewdness, he seldom got them mixed up in the pulpit. All the same his diet was such that he had no stomach for heresy-hunting, while the occasional victims of that popular form of entertainment had generally learned so to confuse the substance of the Faith and confound the issues of the trial, that they were none the worse, and indeed secured incidentally a name and fame for scholarship and ability that rather recommended them for promotion.

The history was much the same, essentially, in the other two branches of Presbyterianism in the 19th century, the "United Presbyterian Church" and the so-called "Free Kirk."

(*To be concluded next month.*)

Sowing the Seed.

Two travellers happened to be passing through a town while a great fire was raging.

One of them sat down at the inn, saying, "It is not my business." But the other ran into the flames and saved much goods and some people.

When he came back his companion asked him "And who bade thee risk thy life in another's business?"

"He," said the brave man, "Who bade me bury seed that it may one day bring forth increase."

"But if thou thyself hadst been buried in the ruins?"

"Then should I have been the seed."

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John Wycliffe.

By Ullin.

Among the treasures of Trinity College Museum, Dublin, perhaps one of the most precious is the volume of Wycliffe's Bible, that rests there. There it lies having survived all these centuries, a direct link with the dawn of the Reformation, the first Bible in the English language of that day. J. R. Green describes Wycliffe as "the first Reformer who dared, when deserted and alone, to question and deny the creed of the Christendom around him, to break through the tradition of the past, and with his last breath to assert the freedom of religious thought against the dogmas of the Papacy."

During a series of kings' reigns, the demands of Rome upon England had been becoming increasingly vexatious and burdensome, until its exactions amounted to five times the king's revenue. The Papacy had acted high handedly in appointing foreigners to benefices, even to the Archbishopric of Canterbury, and the resentment against Rome was reaching high water mark.

A change was rapidly coming over the social life of the country. Hitherto the labourer had been part of landed property, to be bought and sold with the estates, but, now labour was becoming free. Money was badly wanted by those in authority, and if a serf could purchase his freedom, or tenant-try wished to become owners of the lands, the services the over-lord required of them, were commuted for money. A spirit of independence was slowly rising everywhere, and it extended to the national life as a whole. John Wycliffe was the man of the hour. The Pope, a French prelate, was regarded as the natural enemy of the land, as well as the great spoiler of the Church.

Wycliffe was born about 1324, at Hipswell, in Yorkshire, educated at Oxford, and became Master of Balliol in 1361, was made royal chaplain in 1363, and became a doctor of divinity. He was known as a keen disputant, and an opponent of the Friars whose influence was strong in the university. He rapidly became popular with the anti-Church party, by coming forward in 1366 to defend the right of Parliament to refuse the subsidy to the Pope. "The king can justly exercise sovereign power (dominion) in the realm of England by denying the tribute to the Roman Pontiff, and the mistaken doctrines which have been imposed upon the realm are false, and have been imposed without evidence of reason and law." The clergy were against Wycliffe, but John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, and prospective heir to the crown, headed the anti-clerical party, and when Wycliffe was brought for trial before Convocation in St. Paul's to answer for alleged heresies on the theory of government and the relations of Church and State, John of Gaunt was at his side, and the court found it prudent not to condemn, and Wycliffe went free.

Then his criticism of the Pope, the Church, and the religious orders became even more outspoken and scathing, the sting of it being that it gave expression to popular feeling. Among his many propositions, was this daring one, "It is not possible for a man to be excommunicated unless he be first and principally excommunicated by himself." It was Wycliffe's defiance to the Church to do its worst.

Wycliffe was popular at Oxford, and little notice was taken there of the demands made by the Pope through half-hearted bishops, that Wycliffe should be arrested and kept in strict custody. Another summons was finally issued against Wycliffe, but in his stead appeared Sir Lewis Clifford, on behalf of the Prince of Wales, acting as Regent of the kingdom, "who desired them not to presume to determine anything against John Wycliffe."

John of Gaunt, wild and lawless, would have started a spoilation of Church property, the opinions of his friend John Wycliffe were blamed for the prince's sacrilegious behaviour, as was also the breaking out of Wat Tyler's rebellion, and Wycliffe shrank from being identified with violence. He therefore now turned to theology; but, he was no less drastic in this field, than he had been in that of Church government.

It is commonly said that Wycliffe opposed transubstantiation and that in reality he was the first Protestant. The "transubstantiation" he opposed was one which only comparatively recently had become the doctrine of the Church. In a series of propositions Wycliffe had set out his views on the Eucharist, and was appointed to preach before the University on Corpus Christi Day. There was a tremendous commotion and the archbishop forbade the sermon to be preached, but the university paid no heed. The chancellor maintained the university was free, and "refused to assist in stifling sound doctrine. The doctrine

that had obtained a hold was that the bread of the Sacrament, whatever its appearance and taste,—"the accidents,"—had ceased wholly and entirely to be bread, and was the actual body of Christ, born of the Virgin and crucified. Wycliffe opposed this, as "of old time the faith of the Roman Church was, according to the profession of Berangarius, that the bread and wine after benediction are the consecrated Host." He maintained that, "The sacrament of the Eucharist is in figure the body and blood of Christ with which the bread and wine are transubstantiated, which remain something after consecration, although, as the faithful believe, their nature is laid asleep."

Wycliffe's heresy then really consisted in opposing the prevailing doctrine of transubstantiation with an older doctrine. It perhaps amounted to this, which is now being put forward as the "Formula of concord to unite all schools of thought in the Church of England, viz.: "There is a real presence of Christ in the Eucharist which, though ft eludes definition and baffles analysis, is not material." Dr. Temple, Archbishop of York, expresses the idea: "I think there is great need for reticence and reserve in the language that we use of this great boon given to us by Christ."

On the way to Oxford the train passes the little church at Lutterworth where Wycliffe did his crowning work. It stands on a little rounded hill, at the foot of which winds the stream where the ashes of Wycliffe were cast, after his remains had been dug out of the grave and burned. The first complete English Bible had been given out by him, and through Tyndall it is the foundation of our Authorised Version. "Father of English prose was Wycliffe, as Chaucer was of English poetry." His pioneer preachers went everywhere, and his followers were known as Lollards, and they provided the first victims for the fires for heretics. But a greater fire had been kindled, that extended to the Continent, and a century later the Reformation had begun. In that little church while hearing mass, Wycliffe had the fatal seizure, which closed his heroic life.

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— The Unitarian and —
Free Christian Laymen's League

BELFAST CHAPTER

meets in the CENTRAL HALL, ROSEMARY STREET, at 8 p.m., Third Thursday of the month, October to May, inclusive.

OBJECTS (inter alia).

To encourage laymen to take a more active part in the work of the Churches.

To form a bond of union and closer co-operation between the members of the various congregations.

The Committee invite those who are not already members to join. The minimum subscription is 2/6, and further particulars may be obtained from—

MR. J. H. GILLILAND,

35 Rosemary St., Belfast, Hon. Sec.,

MR. J. EDMONDSON, Jr., Asst. Hon Sec.

19 Lime Street, Belfast.

Letter to the Editor.

[Letters to the Editor are welcomed. They should be written in good taste, as brief as possible and duly authenticated. No letter will be inserted without the writer's name.]

"THE NON-SUBSCRIBING PRESBYTERIAN" ably advocated the Sustentation Fund at its commencement, and I am now asking you for a little space, in which to issue an appeal that the good work begun be carried forward nearer to the goal, which its founders had in view. The response was a generous one, and our ministry has greatly benefitted thereby, in fact it has practically "saved the situtation," for since 1900 tremendous changes in money values have taken place. There has been a Great War since then, and the standards by which estimates were originally made have completely altered. The Ministry of the Church, must be supported, somehow, and as well systematically as desultorily and irregularly. Our "Non-Subscribers" have to learn in many cases, how to subscribe, and the first Sustentation Fund (Free Church of Scotland) did not despise the day of small things, but made use of the pence as well as the pounds The higher cost of living has outrun pre-war values, and there are those who still feel the pinch, and to whom additional aid would be a blessing. Out of the "tenth" put aside for tithing, which some maintain brings "good-luck," a portion should be ear-marked for the Sustentation Fund.

JOHN BARRON, Moderator.

Unless there shall remain or arise among us some religious inspiration, true and penetrating enough to carry home its appeal from above into the waiting hearts of men, and in the spirit of divine affection stoop to the lowest want while ministering to the highest, and stir with its persuasion the hidden shame, the secret demand for moral order, the slumbering sense of God, which are already pleading for a nobler life, and so to touch every spring of improvement at once; I know not how any thoughtful observer, moderately acquainted with the history of nations, can contemplate without dismay the approaching future of our European civilisation.

JAMES MARTINEAU.

Taoism.

The Christian missionary in China is faced with insurmountable obstacles, not the least of which is the deeply ingrained custom of ancestor worship. This deeply revered custom has been an integral part of Chinese Religion for centuries and it is not surprising that a strange religion coming from strange countries, telling the Chinese that he must if needs be, despise his father and his mother and follow Christ, finds great difficulty in winning allegiance.

In China there are three great religions competing for supremacy among 400 million people, Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism.

Taoism is the native religion that appeals most to the masses. The founder of Taoism (or rather the reputed founder because he no more founded present-day Taoism with its magic and superstition than Jesus founded present-day orthodox Christianity with its creeds, dogmas and confessions), was Lao-Tsze, a Chinese Sage born in the year 604 B.C.

His teaching is found in a book called Tao Teh King, the sacred book of Taoism which he is believed to have written. Whether the book was actually written by Lao-Tsze or by some of his later disciples, it is theoretically the foundation of Taoism though one who reads the book would fail to recognise it as such, just as one who reads the New Testament would fail to recognise it as the foundation of present-day Christianity.

The Inquirer and Christian Life.

With which is incorporated The Unitarian Herald.

A Journal of Free Religious Fellowship and Organ of Unitarian Christianity.

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The Taoist Bible.

So striking are the resemblances between the Bibles of Taoism and Christianity that the early Christian missionaries made the surprising discovery that much of their teaching was already in China long before they landed.

The famous Taoist maxim " Recompense injury with kindness " appears a few centuries later in such Christian phrases as " Love your enemy as yourself," " Do good to them that hate you," and so on.

The note of self-control struck in Chinese religion, " He who overcomes men has force ; he who overcomes himself is strong " finds an echo in the Christian precept " He that ruleth his spirit is better than he that taketh a city."

Again, the Taoist Bible teaches that a man who would reach the highest good must rid himself of worldly desires and become " as a little child." The resemblance between this and the famous Christian injunction " Unless ye become as little children ye shall in no wise enter the kingdom of heaven," is too obvious to need stating.

Degeneration.

There is much in the Bible of Taoism which any Christian might with profit take to heart, but when we come to the present-day religion of Taoism which is supposed to be based on the sacred book, we find very little to admire and much to deplore.

It is, as one writer has styled it, little more than a mass of superstitious magic. It has degenerated into pantheism and all manner of superstitious ideas have adulterated the original Taoist teaching.

However amid all this mass of superstition and magic, there are some worthy elements.

Not all the Taoist priests recognise the authority of the Taoist Pope with his fantastic claims, nor pander to the credulity of the uneducated masses.

Among certain sections the pure Taoist strain is still preserved and a Chinese student in Europe is always at great pains to indentify himself with the unadulterated Taoist religion, and to condemn just as strongly as any Christian, the magical and miraculous importations.

At the root of Taoism, very clearly expressed in the sacred book and implicit even in the popular Taoism of to-day, is the conviction that spiritual peace and tranquility can be attained only by the elimination of all worldly desires and passions.

Brotherhood of Man.

Through self-renunciation a man becomes at one with the great unifying spiritual principle of the universe. As Lao-Tsze says " Only one who is eternally free from earthly passions can comprehend the spiritual essence of Tao." This is very much like the teaching of that great religious leader who, five centuries afterwards said " The pure in heart shall see God."

The religious truths taught by Taoism have helped to create a national type of a very high order.

Contrary to popular ideas, the Chinese are very earnest, good-natured and peace-loving people. The occasional outbursts of savage violence, usually engineered by fanatical sections against foreign settlements, cannot be taken as an index to the national character. For the most part the Chinese live up to their own national proverb : " The men of the Four seas are all brothers."

It is true that Christianity both teaches and endeavours to live up to the same precept, but the Christian doctrine of the Brotherhood of Man would be more acceptable in China if the Western Nations professing Christianity, attempted to teach the doctrine without the assistance of machine-guns and battleships.

Until Western civilisation does this, we must sympathise with the Chinese who suspects, and has good reason to suspect, that Christianity stands for the brotherhood of man, with the qualification that the man must have a white skin.

In this matter, as in many others, it is time Christianity began to follow Him who said " Other sheep I have which are not of this fold."

S. P. W.

N.B.—Editorial Communications should be sent to the Rev. S. P. Whitehouse, 19 Wellington Park Avenue, Belfast.

Phone—Malone 378.

Contributions must be in the Editor's hands not later than the 20th of the month.

Slack Helpers.

By a Discouraged Minister.

(Reprinted from an old number of "The Inquirer")

The winter's work is beginning. We are hoping the churches will renew their strength and successfully carry on their great task.

But in some cases the hope is feeble. It has been wrestling fiercely with despondency and barely survived the struggle. We are troubled because so many of our members are followers of the Laodiceans—neither hot nor cold. They rarely come to church.

I am not speaking of those who are kept away by other duties or who for some reason, good or bad, dislike the minister. There are many who could attend, who say they like the services, but who allow small excuses—a shower of rain, a late breakfast or merely "that tired feeling" to keep them at home. They expect the minister to be there; they expect him to undertake the often arduous work of preparing a sermon worthy of a great cause—but they feel under no obligation to provide him with a congregation.

They like him, and if he were to go they would be sorry and a crowd three times the size of his normal attendance on Sunday, would assemble and make appreciative speeches--quite sincere speeches too—but they won't come to church. It's not fair. It's not cricket. It's not logical. But there it is.

We are disturbed also by the fact that institutions which have been provided for the benefit of church members and as a means of attracting outsiders to the services often become rivals of the church itself. They use the church premises, waste the electric light, make work for the caretaker, but feel under no obligation to support the church in any way. It the church requires its own hall for some special occasion, they resent "interference." If they are invited to a service or a social they ostentatiously stay away. It sometimes seems that members are selected on church committees to look after their own particular society as against the interest of the church as a whole.

This obviously ought not to be. All the institutions should be subordinate to the church. All should feel they are part of the church and work for the church. The church is established for worship, for instruction in divine truth, for inspiration and for fellowship in seeking the Kingdom of God, and this purpose should be kept in the forefront all the time. No church which has any conception of its true function will allow its institutions a free hand. Nor can any church in these days afford to maintain societies not only unprofitable, but damaging to itself.

We must secure somehow, from all our various institutions, more consideration and more co-operation before we can reasonably hope for a real revival. But if the members realised how much they can and should help us and how much we can and would help them I am sure they would give us what we ask. Then the rough places would be made plain and the crooked places straight, and together we should march to great achievements.

Obituary.

Mrs. Hind.

We record, with profound regret, the death of Mrs E. L. Hind, Ardara, Comber, which took place with tragic suddenness, at a Nursing Home in Dublin, on Monday, 30th June. Mrs. Hind was the daughter of the late Right Hon. Thomas Andrews and Mrs. Andrews, Ardara. Her husband, the late Lieut.-Colonel Lawrence Hind, M.C., made the supreme sacrifice on the Somme battle-field on July 1st 1916. Since his death Mrs. Hind and her children had resided at Ardara.

By her passing, our Church in Comber and our movement generally, have sustained a grievous loss. Mrs. Hind was a warm and loyal Unitarian—devoted to the principles of our faith and generous in her gifts towards its support.

The community of Comber—of all creeds, will miss her kindly presence—for its welfare was very close to her heart. We extend to her three sorrowing daughters and to her three brothers, our deepest sympathy in their great loss. Mrs. Hind was laid to rest in the family burying-ground attached to the Unitarian Church, Comber. The service at Ardara, and at the grave-side was conducted by the Revs. E. Savell Hicks, M.A., Dublin and the Rev. J. Glynne Davies, Comber.

Reports.

Belfast : All Souls'.—Saturday, 28th June, was the date of this year's Sunday school excursion to Glenarm on the Antrim Coast. As in previous years the outing was thoroughly enjoyed by young and old. The weather was fine except for one or two occasional showers, which did not interfere with the programme. The motor drive was most enjoyable and a hungry crowd did full justice to the excellent lunch and tea which were served in the schoolroom, thanks to the generous hospitality of the Rev. J. A. Miskimmin and the ladies of the Glenarm Congregation who spared no effort to make the excursionists much more comfortable than they could reasonably expect. After tea the minister, on behalf of those who had so much enjoyed the hospitality, expressed appreciation to the Glenarm friends for their kindness. We also have to thank those ladies of our own congregation who prepared the food and those who served it. The fact that the same willing hands perform the same tasks each year does not invest our expressed gratitude with customary formality. Each excursion is a fresh treat and evokes fresh expressions of appreciation. Especially are we indebted to Miss A. Montgomery who year by year, shoulders the main responsibility of making all the arrangements.

* *

Holywood.—The Annual Outing of the children of the Sunday School took place on Saturday, July 5th, when in fine weather, a party of between 60 and 70, had a very enjoyable visit to Bangor. The afternoon was spent in the Park and after tea the scholars were taken to Ballyholme where sports and games were indulged in until nearly eight o'clock, when they returned home by train, tired but happy in having spent one of the happiest trips. The party was accompanied by Rev. and Mrs. Edgar Lockett, Mrs. F. A. Robinson, Mr. W. J. Harvey and Misses S. and E. Meneely.

* *

Larne and Kilwaughter.—The Annual Sunday School Excursion was held on Tuesday, 1st July. The place of venue was Roywood, Drains Bay. Four charabancs conveyed the children and a few of their elders, on a perfect summer day to this beautiful retreat owned by Mrs. Axon. Soon after arrival at 11-30 tea was served and full justice done to the good things provided. Incidentally, we heard many expressions of appreciation of Mrs. Axon's liberality and the courtesy of her helpers. During a long afternoon the energy and vitality of youth found an outlet in diverse directions, racing, skipping, football etc., while a few walked down to the edge of the sea and even ventured into the nearer shallows of the incoming tide. About 5 o'clock the party assembled again for tea, after which it was time to think of leaving for Larne. The homeward journey commenced about 6-30, and with much waving of flags and handkerchiefs, loud and lusty singing of the latest songs, the party proclaimed its approval of the things of this world, and testified to the success of another Sunday School Excursion.

On Tues., 8th July, the Annual Summer Fete and Cake Fair promoted by the ladies of the above congregation was held in the schoolroom and grounds. Much ingenuity and skill were displayed in the decorations and not only inside but outside we had the festive appeal of flags and bunting. At 3 o'clock in the afternoon, in the presence of a large attendance, the assistant minister of the Church, the Rev. John Begg, declared the sale open, and wished it all success. A number of stalls, very elegantly set out, made attractive appeals to the visitors and it was evident at closing time that the stall-holders had received the due reward of their labours. Unfortunately during the afternoon rain began to fall and somewhat marred the proceedings, but a cheerful spirit was encouraged by the lively strains of a fine-toned electric gramophone, kindly lent and operated by Mr. Wm. Law, electrician, Larne. Towards evening the rain ceased, and as usual, there were numerous side-shows and amusements to be indulged in outside. At the end of the day, when the tired workers met together to talk over their labours, it was felt that our function had been both socially and financially most successful. It would be invidious here to single out names for praise, when only highest praise is due to all who so willingly helped and we content ourselves with recording our sincere thanks to all our good friends and well-wishers in the Old Presbyterian Congregation of Larne and Kilwaughter.

Newry.—The young people's flower service was held on Sunday evening, June 22nd, and despite the unfavourable weather there was a large attendance, including contingents from the Girl Guides, under the leadership of Miss Audrey Smartt ; and the Church Lads' Brigade, under the leadership of Mr. Gerald Reside. The scholars, assisted by an augmented choir, sang an anthem, "Fear not, ye children of Zion," and Miss King sang a solo. Mrs. T. S. M'Kinstry, in the absence of Mrs. Slipper, presided at the organ. The solo in the anthem was sung by Mrs. Morris, and the quartette by Mrs. Morris, Mrs. Smith, Mr. Morris and Mr. Adamson. The Rev. G. J. Slipper, gave an interesting address, taking for his text "I serve." The collection on behalf of the scholars' outing was generously responded to. Before concluding the service, the preacher thanked all who had helped, and especially the members of the Guides and Church Lads' Brigade, for their attendance.

Stanhope Street Women's League.—On Friday, June 27th, the members of the above League Branch enjoyed the hospitality of Miss Bruce and Miss Hutton at The Farm, Belfast. With the exception of one sharp shower the weather was favourable and tea was served to the 30 or more members under the spreading trees on the lawns. A walk round the grounds and green-houses, some competitive games and the dances of Miss Alison Kennedy made the time pass pleasantly and the time of departure came all too soon. The thanks of the members was suitably expressed by Mrs. E. R. Jackson and the cheers of the gathering rang out. Miss Bruce, in spite of her 98 years, was a moving spirit in the entertainment and presented each member with a bouquet of flowers and a bag of sweets on departure.

Congregations of the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland.

Belfast.—First Church, Rosemary Street, 11-30 and 7, Rev. R. Nicol Cross, M.A.
, All Souls', Elmwood Avenue, 11-30 and 7, Rev. Sydney P. Whitehouse.
,, Mountpottinger Unitarian Church, 11-30 and 7, Rev. J. H. Ewbank, B.A., B.D.
,, York Street Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church, 11-30 and 7, Rev. A. L. Agnew, B.A.

Dublin.—Unitarian Church, Stephen's Green, 12 and 7, Rev. E. Savell Hicks, M.A.

Antrim.—Old Presbyterian Meeting House, 12 noon, Rev. George V. Crook.

Ballee.—Presbyterian Meeting House, 11-30 a.m., Rev. Joseph H. Bibby.

Ballycarry.—Presbyterian Old Meeting House, 12 noon, and 7 p.m. occasional Sundays. Rev. William G. Marsden.

Ballyclare.—Old Presbyterian Meeting House, 12 noon, Rev. A. M. Bell, B.A.

Ballyhemlin.—Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Meeting House, 12 noon, Rev. John Barron.

Ballymoney.—The Remonstrant Meeting House, 12-15 p.m., Rev. Felix Holt, B.A.

Banbridge.—First Presbyterian Church, 12 noon and 6-30 p.m., Rev. Percival Godding.

Cairncastle.—Old Meeting House. 12-15 p.m.

Clough.—Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Meeting House, 11-30 a.m.—Rev. J. Shaw Brown.

Comber.—Unitarian Church, 12 noon and 6-30 (October to April), Rev. J. Glynne Davies.

Cork.—The Old Presbyterian Church, 12 noon, and 7 p.m., Rev. W. A. Weatherall.

Crumlin.—The Old Presbyterian Church, 12 noon, Evening Service monthly, 7-15, Rev. G. Price-Jones.

Downpatrick.—First Presbyterian Church, 11-30 a.m., Supply.

Dromore.—Unitarian Church, 12 noon and 6 p.m., Rev. Alfred Davison.

Dunmurry.—First Presbyterian Non-Subscribing Church, 1 noon, Rev. John A. Kelly.

Glenarm.—Old Presbyterian Meeting House, 12 noon, Rev. J. A. Miskimmin, B.A.

Greyabbey.—Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church, 12 noon (6 p.m. November to February), Rev. W. H. T. Tilson, M.A.

Holywood.—First Presbyterian Church, 11-30 a.m. and 7 p.m., Rev. Edgar Lockett.

Killinchy. — Remonstrant Presbyterian Church, 12-15 p.m., and 7 p.m., occasional Sundays, Rev. David J. Williams.

Larne.—Old Presbyterian Church (Unitarian), 11-30 a.m. and 7 p.m., Rev. James Kennedy and Rev. John Begg.

Moira.—First Presbyterian Church, 3-15 p.m., Rev. Percival Godding.

Moneyrea.—Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church 12 o'clock noon.—Rev. J. Dare Davies.

Newry.—First Presbyterian Church, 12 noon and 7 p.m. (October to May), Rev. G. J Slipper.

Newtownards.—Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church, 3-30 p.m., Rev. W. H. T. Tilson, M.A.

Rademon.—First Kilmore Remonstrant Church, 12-15 p.m., Rev. John J. Magill, B.A.

Raloo.—Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church, 12 noon, Rev. John M'Cleery.

Templepatrick.—Old Presbyterian Church, 12 noon, Rev. Alfred Turner.

Ravara.—Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church. 3-30 p.m., last Sunday in month, Rev. J. Dare Davies.

Warrenpoint.—Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church.—Services fortnightly, October to May, at 3-30 p.m.—Rev. G. J. Slipper.

Will Ministers and Church Secretaries please advise the Editor of any mistakes in the above details

Ulster Unitarian Christian Association.

Hon. Secretary—REV. G. J. SLIPPER, 7 TREVOR HILL, NEWRY.

CENTENARY YEAR

OF

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